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RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO PRIORITY 8349  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 BERLIN 001227

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TAGS: [KNNP](#) [PARM](#) [MNUC](#) [PHUM](#) [EU](#) [GM](#) [IR](#)

SUBJECT: IRAN: GERMAN PARLIAMENT FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE  
CHAIRMAN VISITS TEHRAN

Classified By: Acting Political Minister-Counselor John Lister; reasons  
1.4(b) and (d).

¶1. (SBU) Summary: In a May 4 press conference, Ruprecht Polenz (CDU), Chairman of the German Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee and frequent commentator in the German media, provided a readout of his May 2-3 visit to Tehran. Polenz said that the nuclear subject had come to dominate the public discourse in Iran to the point that it now is inhibiting further discussion of social and political reforms. He emphasized that it is essential that Iran "hear from all sides" that Iran's nuclear program is a serious concern of the international community, and not just the United States. Polenz highlighted the importance of maintaining unity between Europe, the United States, and the rest of the international community in dealing with Iran. In that context, Polenz said he believes that, as a next step, a "weaker" resolution supported by the entire UNSC would be more important than having a more strongly-worded resolution that lacks the full support of the UNSC members. Polenz repeated his previous calls for the United States to engage in talks with the Iranians regarding the nuclear dispute. (Comment: Polenz does not argue that the USG should supplant the EU3 in any future negotiations, but that the USG should supplement the EU3 effort more directly in some ill-defined way. End Comment) Polenz also touched briefly on other topics of his discussions in Tehran, including Iranian threats against Israel, regional security, and human rights. End Summary.

¶2. (U) During his May 2-3 visit to Tehran, Polenz met with various Iranian officials and parliamentarians, including: Hassan Rouhani, former Secretary-General of the Iranian National Security Council (and former Iranian chief nuclear issues negotiator); Deputy FM Manouchehr Mohammadi; Deputy FM Sa'id Jalili; Gholamali Haddad Adel, President of the Iranian Parliament; and Ala'eddin Borujerdi, Chairman of the Iranian Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee. Polenz was accompanied by Marieluise Beck, a Green party representative from the German Parliament's Foreign Relations Committee.

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Iran/nuclear Problem  
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13. (U) Polenz reported that the nuclear problem was the key issue on the agenda of his visit. He said that the subject had come to dominate the public discourse in Iran to the point that it now is inhibiting further discussion of social and political reforms. Polenz reported that the Iranian press and opposition parties had been given "directives" from the Iranian regime to support the official Iranian line on the nuclear dispute, and that censorship was increasing. He speculated that Iranian President Ahmadinejad might well view an escalation of the dispute as to his advantage, insofar as it distracts Iranians from focusing on his failure to keep his campaign promises to boost employment and fight corruption.

14. (U) According to Polenz, the Iranians view the nuclear issue as a dispute between Iran and the United States, and argue that the USG has pressured the Europeans and others into supporting the U.S. position. Polenz emphasized that, in light of this erroneous view, it is essential that Iran "hear from all sides" that Iran's nuclear program is a serious concern of the international community, and not just the United States. Responding to questions regarding media reports that Iranian parliamentarians had called for Germany to play a mediator role, Polenz insisted that Germany could not and would not play such a role, since Germany was aligned with its European and other partners in its concerns about Iran's nuclear program. Polenz highlighted the importance of maintaining unity between Europe, the United States, and the rest of the international community in dealing with Iran. In that context, Polenz said he believes that, as a next step, a "weaker" resolution supported by the entire UNSC would be more important than having a more strongly-worded resolution

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that lacks the full support of the UNSC members.

15. (U) Polenz said the main sticking point of the nuclear dispute is getting Iran to agree to suspend its uranium enrichment program. He readily admitted not having an answer to the problem, in the face of continued Iranian recalcitrance. However, he argued that any successful resolution would require the international community to apply pressure, "in careful doses" (to avoid counterproductive escalation), and to offer incentives. Polenz also referred to various concepts for providing nuclear fuel assurances to Iran as being worth exploring further, to counter Iranian arguments that they need to develop nuclear enrichment capabilities so as not to be vulnerable to politically-motivated interruptions in fuel supply.

16. (SBU) Polenz repeated his previous calls for the United States to engage in talks with the Iranians regarding the nuclear dispute, arguing that a number of factors tied to any future resolution, including Iranian "security concerns," would require direct U.S. involvement. (Comment: Polenz does not argue that the USG should supplant the EU3 in any future negotiations, but that the USG should supplement the EU3 effort more directly in some ill-defined way. End Comment) He also suggested that the prospect of normalization of relations with the United States could be an additional incentive for Tehran, though he remarked that U.S. officials had rejected the idea during his recent consultations in Washington. Asked by a reporter how President Bush's announced July visit to Germany might affect the Iran-related diplomacy, Polenz said that, following President Bush's February 2005 visit to Germany/Europe, the USG had decided to support the EU negotiations by offering to cease blocking Iran's application for WTO membership and easing restrictions on the export of civil aircraft parts to Iran. Polenz speculated that President Bush's upcoming visit might lead the USG to think of other such incentives it could offer.

17. (U) Regarding press speculation of potential military options, Polenz said that his recent discussions in

Washington had reassured him that the USG is committed to seeking a diplomatic solution. He further commented that he thought that maintaining some ambiguity with regard to the question of military action "need not damage the current diplomatic effort." On the subject of possible sanctions, Polenz said that Iran needs to understand that no country can afford to isolate itself in a globalized world. However, he concluded that, beyond noting that sanctions options were being considered, he did not wish to comment in detail in public. Beck commented that economic sanctions can be problematic, and even backfire, and therefore need to be approached carefully.

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Iranian Threats Against Israel  
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¶18. (U) Polenz said that he had raised German outrage about Iranian President Ahmadinejad's threats against Israel. According to Polenz, his Iranian interlocutors responded by claiming that former Iranian President Rafsanjani had rejected Ahmadinejad's statements, and that Ayatollah Khamenei had stated in the Iranian Parliament that Iran has no intention of attacking anyone. Polenz conceded that he was unable to evaluate the substance of such claims, but noted that he had emphasized the Roadmap and two state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in all of his discussions.

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Regional Security  
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¶19. (U) Polenz said that he also had discussed Iraq and Afghanistan while in Tehran. He said he emphasized to the Iranians that they should have a strong self-interest in

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avoiding a civil war in Iraq. Polenz lamented that the U.S. offer of talks with Iran regarding the security situation in Iraq had not come to fruition. On Afghanistan, Polenz assessed Iran as playing a positive role. He added that the Iranians are concerned about Afghan-based drug trafficking and would like more European support in addressing the problem.

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Human Rights Issues  
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¶10. (U) Polenz reported that he raised several human rights cases with the Iranians. One involves the case of German citizen Donald Klein who is serving an 18-month sentence in Iran for allegedly illegally entering Iranian territorial waters. The others are cases being tracked by Amnesty International, two of which involve members of Iran's Arab minority and one of which relates to Iran's subjection of minors to the death penalty. Regarding the latter point, Polenz said that the Iranian Parliament is discussing raising the age at which someone could be sentenced to death in Iran. Beck said that the delegation's ability to meet with Iranian civil society representatives, reformers, and human rights activists was constrained by the fact that such Iranians were hesitant to meet them. She described this as a notable shift in the Iranian domestic political atmosphere in comparison with past experience.

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Comment  
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¶11. (C) Polenz is frequently quoted in the German media on foreign policy issues. He acknowledged that he initially had questioned whether it made sense to travel to Iran at this time, given the hard line taken by the Iranian government and Ahmadinejad's inflammatory comments. In the wake of his

trip, he said that he had concluded that it indeed was worthwhile and important to maintain such dialogue with Iranian contacts. Polenz' comments reflect disagreement within his committee regarding the advisability of the trip. It is worth noting that only one other committee member, Marieluise Beck (Greens), joined Polenz on the trip. In fact, in a private conversation last week, Deputy Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Hans-Ulrich Klose (SPD) told us that he had declined to join Polenz on the trip, arguing that the time was inappropriate for such a visit. We have seen a similar debate within the German Institute for International and Security Affairs ("Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik"), a German government-sponsored, independent NGO that plans its own visit to Tehran May 5-10. While the Director of the Institute, Volker Perthes (a Middle East expert), supports the trip, members of his staff working on nonproliferation affairs are critical of the idea, and at least one prominent member of the staff has declined to participate.

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